



The

Huddle

Cultivating culture through **innovation** *and* **efficiencies**

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A Moment with a Master Black Belt...

COE Dedicated to Continuous Learning and Creating Efficiencies in 2019

by Matthew Singh, Director of Operational Excellence



The holidays are such a magical time of year; bells ringing, families spending time together, snow covered

tree tops. All milestones that make the holiday season memorable. Those of you in management roles, I know this time of the year also lends itself to strategic planning and getting ready for the new years' activities. Here at the Center of Operational Excellence (COE) we have several key milestones we are looking at as we plan out 2019. I wanted to share some of the support we are looking to provide the enterprise in 2019.

First, and close to my heart, we are launching the Black Belt program which will focus on addressing enterprise wide issues that you have brought up to us. The Black Belts will work closely with the Governor's Office, Cabinet Members, agency administration, and others to ensure we can look across silos to address the issues brought to our attention. Next, we look to grow our total number of projects executed in 2019. We plan on doing this by

adding new Process Improvement Coordinators (PIC) and Process Improvement Supervisors to the State's larger agencies such as HHS, DOT, Corrections and even State Patrol in order to support the change efforts.

These PIC's will be ensuring the operational and financial pain points, that each of you are addressing, can become executed successfully and in a timely manner. Lastly, I plan on continued growth of the Executive Green Belt and Certified Lean Leader Certifications. Remember these two certifications are free to all code agency employees and aim to give participants the tools and educational support needed

to drive change in your agencies. These include high level process improvements, such as executive decisions, and daily "Just do it" process improvements in the work that is done.

As we enjoy these holidays seasons, I want you to think about your own personal strategic plan. What new training can my team help provide to you or what operation/process has been nagging at you for change over the last 6-12 months and how will you make those changes? I hope each of you had a wonderful holiday season and please do not hesitate reaching out should you need anything.

Process Improvements

Results statewide since COE formed



201
projects



220,731
hours saved

Teamwork and Communication Benefits Realized from Daily Huddles

by Madeline Hoffer, Process Improvement Coordinator II, Department of Natural Resources



The Groundwater Registrations Division has one of the longest-running morning huddles in the Department of Natural Resources. They have met daily since July 2017, and the huddle has become an integral part of their work routine. According to Maggie Weseley and Heather McPherson, daily huddles have increased the amount of communication within the division. In addition to going over their QDIP board, the team uses the huddle to balance their workload between members. This has taken on increased importance recently, as the Groundwater Registrations Division has fewer employees than usual.

Daily huddles have helped to ensure that no single team member becomes overloaded with work.

The consistent, daily use of the QDIP board has brought many issues to the team's attention resulting in process improvements.

According to Division Head Mike Thompson, a high proportion of the issues identified have come from the Quality metric. This metric measures the number of well registration forms that have to be returned to well drilling firms due to errors. The team noticed a pattern that many of the forms containing errors were submitted by the same well drilling firm, and was able to



An increase in communication and a balanced workload for every teammate are two of the benefits of the Groundwater Registrations Division's huddle. Pictured above: Heather McPherson (left) and Maggie Weseley (right) are completing their QDIP board during their morning huddle.

reach out to that firm to provide training on the submittal process. After doing this, the Quality goal improved. The team has also discovered the most frequent error overall is an incorrect well location noted on the form. Mike is currently working with Nebraska Interactive to implement a mapping feature to help users find the correct location before submitting forms.

Andi Bridgmon Promoted to COE Deputy Director

by Seth Fager, Process Improvement Coordinator II, Department of Health and Human Services



In November of 2018, Andi Bridgmon was promoted to Deputy Director of the Center of Operational

Excellence (COE). Andi had previously worked as a Process Improvement Coordinator at the Department of Labor since November of 2016. In June of 2017, she received her Lean Six Sigma Green Belt Certification and was awarded the Distinguished Green Belt award for cohort two of the green belt training within the COE.

In this role, Andi will be performing program and methodology audits for agencies and Process Improvement Coordinators, to ensure these meet the standards set forth by the COE. She will also be performing COE analytics, assisting in the management of shared services, coaching and mentoring green belts, and working on special projects as assigned by the COE director.

Andi especially enjoys process improvement because this empowers team members in the work they do each and every day. She went on to comment that many processes appear to be simple at first, but by breaking these down step-by-step, you can see how complicated the processes really are. Helping the team work through those complications and come up with a more streamlined process is very reward-

ing. Furthermore, Bridgmon stated, process improvement is an excellent opportunity for team members to contribute in making state government more efficient and effective by eliminating unnecessary steps, delays, and duplication.

In 2008, Andi received her Associates Degree in Business Administration from Southeast Community College and her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Doane College in 2010. Prior to working for the State of Nebraska she managed a call center and processing team with Dell Services. Outside of work, Andi enjoys spending time with her husband, Nick, and their four month old daughter, Georgia. Andi's personal motto, by Anne Sweeney, states, "Define success on your own terms, achieve it by your own rules, and build a life you're proud to live."

Executive Decision Enhances Public Safety and Reduces Staffing Hours

by Heather Behl, Process Improvement Supervisor, Department of Health and Human Services

For most people, a visit to the doctor requires a simple call to set up the appointment. When dealing with individuals incarcerated in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services the process can be far more complex.

When someone requires specialized care, which cannot be provided by medical personnel at NDCS, appointments are made with providers in the community. Often several follow-up appointments are also needed. This creates a staff intensive process when it comes to both planning and then carrying out those visits.

NDCS Medical Director, Dr. Harbans Deol knew there must be a better way.

"Transportation is a major deal in any correctional facility and trying to schedule traveling is difficult on any day," Deol said. "Medical travel orders affect a lot of people and there are so many that need to be involved in the decision. That is why I knew we needed to look at doing this differently."

A process improvement project was undertaken to look at how medical staff and doctors could reduce medical travel orders throughout the agency. As with any change, there were barriers to overcome at the start of the project. One of the key challenges was staff buy-in. Team members were used to the process that had been utilized for many years. Questioning the process was hard because they were used to making decisions on their own. Instead, Dr. Deol took a team approach that included talking through each patient's case, to determine if it required a visit to an outside specialist.

Dr. Deol said he utilized a two-prong approach to improving the process.

"First, I questioned, 'did we do

everything possible before referring the patient?' Also, I wanted to use this as an education opportunity. Doctors work in different facilities and rarely have an opportunity to talk. I wanted to create a brainstorming piece so we could look at the best care possible."

Dr. Deol created a committee responsible for reviewing medical cases that may require referral to an outside specialist. Previously, yearly medical travel orders averaged around 4,500 in NDCS. By utilizing this new review process, those travel orders have been reduced to just over 2,500.

Cost savings is not the only way by which Dr. Deol measures the success of this improvement project.

"The benefit is that we get to dive into how we give the best care to this individual," Deol said. "It also provides greater time for the doctor and the patient. It helps the doctor and the individual to get on the same page about treatment options and create that buy-in."



An executive decision made by Dr. Harbans Deol, Medical Director for the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services streamlined the review of medical travel orders to determine if medical appointments could be done in-house first before transporting individuals outside of the facility. By reviewing these requests, NDCS cut in half the number of travel requests outside the facilities for medical care and reduced the need of overtime or reassignment of positions for teammates. This decision also improves public safety by reducing the need for travel out of the facilities. (Pictured above are Dr. Harbans Deol and Kierra Trout).

For those who may experience barriers in their own process improvement projects Dr. Deol offered, "Talking and understanding are important to breaking through barriers. For instance, I might perceive one barrier, but in truth, it might be something entirely different. Communicating with each other and making sure everyone understands where we are going will help to eliminate barriers. Teamwork is the key to any problem you face."

Tool Sharpening with Doug: The Affinity Diagram

by Doug Barry, Process Improvement Coordinator II, Department of Environmental Quality

Affinity Diagram Best Uses:

Convolved Problems, Too Many Ideas, Large Complex Issues, Gaining Group Consensus

The Affinity Diagram is a versatile tool for brainstorming and organizing seemingly diverse ideas. Frequently, teams grapple with a large cluster of issues all tied into a giant ball of problems. This can cause the team to become confused and feel overwhelmed. In these situations, the Center of Operational Excellence (COE) suggests using the Affinity Diagram to help identify, organize, and group these ideas into manageable themes, so the team can begin the exciting work of solving their issues.

Starting with randomly generated ideas, the Affinity Diagram helps a team organize those ideas into related groups of ideas based on common themes. From the chaos of randomly generated ideas comes an insight into the common threads that link these together. From there, the best idea or solution often emerges. Here's how the Affinity Diagram works:

1. Create a clear and concise issue statement or question. The statement can be as simple as "What do our customers want from us?" Write this on a whiteboard or flipchart so that the team can see it.
2. Brainstorm ideas that address the issue statement. Think quantity and not quality. Write each idea on an

individual sticky note. When writing your ideas, be thorough, yet concise -- try sticking to just 3 to 5 words. Once done, place the notes randomly on the wall or whiteboard.

3. Without discussion, sort the stickies into groups of ideas that are related in some way. It is important to allow enough time for this and the activity may be performed over an

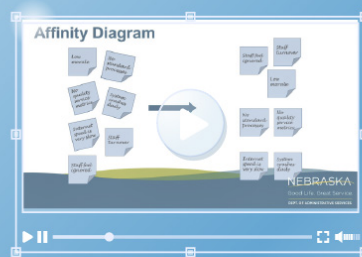
or theme of that grouping.

6. Place a "header" sticky note with the idea or theme at the top of each group, again using 3-5 words.

7. Do one last sort, looking for groupings that are related and could be joined. Create a "superheader" for each of these. Limit the total number of themes to between 5 and 9.

Want to Learn More???

please click here for a
Video Tutorial



Affinity Diagram

http://das.nebraska.gov/coe/assets/Affinity_Diagram.mp4

extended timeframe such as a day or two to allow team members to fully consider the issues and themes. It is not uncommon for stickies to move back and forth between groups until the final 5-10 groups emerge.

4. If some ideas do not fit into any theme, separate them as "stand-alone" ideas. If some ideas fit into more than one theme, create a duplicate sticky note and put it in both groups.
5. Now you can talk! Discuss each grouping and identify the main idea

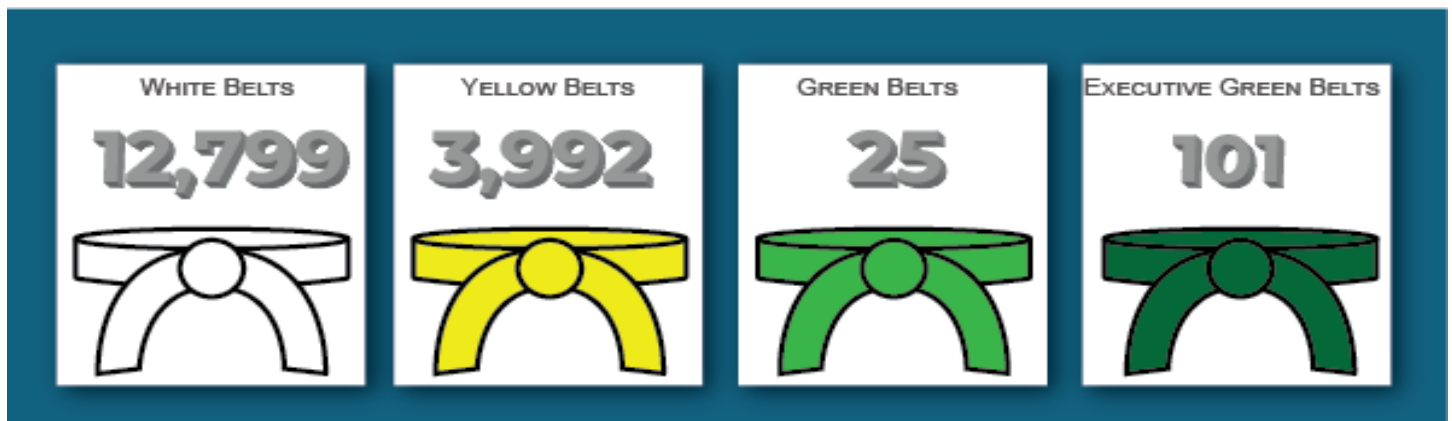
You can now rank each theme in order of importance to the team or organization using voting or other another method. Finally, analyze each theme of related issues. The underlying problem(s), possible solutions, and probable decision points should be clearer. Click the image below to watch a short video describing the process.

Affinity Diagram Tips

1. Cross-functional teams often provide the best overview of ideas and insights to a problem.
2. Stakeholders from outside a team can provide unique perspectives teams often miss.
3. Ensure everyone involved contributes ideas.
4. Use markers, as they are easier to read from a distance.

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Conversations with an Executive Green Belt: Dr. Harbans Deol

by Seth Fager, Process Improvement Coordinator II, Department of Health and Human Services

Conversations with a Green Belt

For the past two years Dr. Deol has served as the Health Services Director for the Nebraska Department of Corrections (NDOC). In this role, he is responsible for all aspects of Healthcare at NDCS. Prior to working at NDCS, Dr. Deol worked in a similar role at the Iowa Department of Corrections for 17 years. After joining NDCS, Dr. Deol was able to bring his past experience and knowledge to begin implementing several process improvement ideas at NDCS.

In July of 2018, Dr. Deol completed his Lean Six Sigma Executive Green Belt certification through the Center of Operational Excellence at the State of Nebraska. Dr. Deol had previous experience implementing change, but found the structure and business model within Lean Six Sigma to be particularly helpful. Furthermore, he appreciated the staff buy-in the executive decision making model created. With this in mind, he was able to quickly initiate several process improvement executive decisions

This month the Center of Operational Excellence is proud to highlight Dr. Harbans Deol.

that resulted in savings in the form of money and hours saved in staff time.

One of the most impactful executive decisions made centered on the amount of prescriptions written for medications that could be purchased over-the-counter. When looking at the data, it was found that approximately 2,200 prescriptions were being written each month for over-the-counter

medication was not medically necessary, the inmate would then need to purchase this from the facility canteen. This change in the process resulted in both hours saved from the staff time involved and a hard savings from the over-the-counter medication used. This savings was then able to be reinvested in another process improvement by giving inmates a thirty day supply of medication when being released from prison, along with two

refill prescriptions. This helps to assist in keeping newly released inmates on medications that are necessary and to continue their rehabilitation.

Beyond using the executive decision making model, Dr. Deol also runs an active swim lane board. The swim lane tracks the various different projects that are going on in the medical department and all staff under Dr. Deol have their own swim lane. This helps to let everyone



Pictured is the swim lane board that tracks the status of the various projects going on in the medical department.

medications that could be purchased at the facility canteen. This was not only costing money, but a large amount of staff time was also being spent on the process.

Using the Executive Green Belt decision making model, Dr. Deol was able to implement a new process where inmates began purchasing over-the-counter medications that were not deemed medically necessary. Medical staff would still prescribe over-the-counter medications, if these were medically necessary. If the over-the-counter

know where the projects stand. When the projects are completed, the sticky notes are placed in a binder that can be referenced later to help share all of the successes that have been accomplished.

Outside of work, Dr. Deol has two children who both are pursuing careers in the field of medicine. In his free time, Dr. Deol enjoys hiking and has gone on several hiking treks in various countries, including a recent trip to Patagonia in Argentina.



Help Us Grow Nebraska

Questions? Or have a suggestion for process improvement in your area?
Please contact your agency's Process Improvement Coordinator

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